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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 3809

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 000657

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/06/2019
TAGS: PREL KPAL KWBG UNGA IS
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RICE'S MEETING WITH PALESTINIAN
PERMANENT OBSERVER MANSOUR

REF: USUN NEW YORK 74

Classified By: Ambassador Susan E. Rice for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Palestinian Observer Ambassador Mansour raised with Ambassador Rice on July 6 the possibility of cooperating on the various Israeli-Palestinian-related UNGA resolutions. Ambassador Rice pressed Mansour to set a tone during the upcoming UNGA that is constructive, responsible, and proactively supports the goal of a two-state solution and not one of business as usual in terms of "bashing Israel" at the UN. End summary.

¶2. (C) Palestinian Permanent Observer Ambassador Riyad Mansour met with Ambassador Rice on July 6 to follow up on their January 28 introductory meeting when they had discussed potentially cooperating on the 16 Israeli-Palestinian-related resolutions in the upcoming General Assembly (reftel). He then offered a selective explanation of some of the resolutions and called for the U.S. to reconsider either its negative vote or abstention, noting that European states were able to vote in favor of most of the resolutions. Mansour said that it would be "positive for us, Arab countries, and others to see some shift from the U.S. Administration." Ambassador Rice responded that the Administration has demonstrated real, tangible changes on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. In support of our combined objective of a two-state solution, she stressed, "we need to create a new atmosphere in the General Assembly, one that is not business as usual in terms of bashing Israel." She stressed the need to minimize the risks to the broader process that might emanate from unhelpful actions at the United Nations. She asked Ambassador Mansour to set a tone and leadership style that is constructive and responsible.

¶3. (C) Ambassador Mansour noted his past willingness to work with the U.S. delegation to remove language in resolutions deemed anti-Israeli and stressed that his delegation has always been able to reach consensus on draft resolutions with the European states. Ambassador Wolff reminded Ambassador Mansour that usually the Palestinian delegation negotiates until the Europeans say they can vote in favor of a resolution and then ends the negotiations without trying to address U.S. concerns.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Mansour noted that his delegation is part of the Arab Group, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) and finds it hard to shift positions from those of the group if there is no change on the ground or if the situation on the ground worsens. Ambassador Rice underlined that Palestinians and Arabs cannot sit back and "be on autopilot until we reach nirvana, but instead must work to proactively change the atmosphere now." She underscored that all parties involved in the conflict must take steps forward. Mansour questioned why Palestinians should have to give up their moral strength at the UN by sacrificing their positions on one or more of the resolutions if Israel is not living up to its Road Map

obligations and why he should not use the Gaza Board of Inquiry report to pressure the Israeli government if it continues to be intransigent. Ambassador Rice responded that grandstanding has never worked successfully to pressure the Israelis. Instead, she underlined, "it is the quiet, hard work that will mean progress in the end."

15. (C) When Mansour pressed whether the U.S. would confront Israel at the UN if it remains intransigent, Ambassador Rice quickly responded that the U.S. is not going to enter into conflict with Israel at the United Nations. Mansour said that, if Israel does not make progress on freezing settlements, the Arab Foreign Ministers may raise the issue with the Security Council. Ambassador Rice urged Ambassador Mansour not to focus on hypotheticals but on actual upcoming events, like the next General Assembly session, and called on him and his Arab partners in New York to be proactive and work towards a General Assembly session that is different than past sessions. She stressed that the tone of the General Assembly can affect progress towards a two-state solution by being supportive, neutral, or harmful to it. Ambassador Mansour said he agreed with the general idea to be partners but much of his willingness to move forward would depend on Israel's attitude. He also proposed to Ambassador Rice that they continue this frank exchange and look more closely at the various resolutions, including those before the current ECOSOC session in Geneva.

RICE